



# City of Villa Park

17855 Santiago Boulevard, Villa Park, California 92861-4187  
(714) 998-1500 • Fax: (714) 998-1508

[www.villapark.org](http://www.villapark.org)

June 27, 2023

Maria Hernandez  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

**RE: CITY OF VILLA PARK RESPONSE TO THE 2022-2023 ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT, “GIMME SHELTER AND A POUND OF ADVICE, THE STATE OF ANIMAL WELFARE OVERSEEN BY THE COUNTY OF ORANGE”**

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the City of Villa Park, I am pleased to respond to the Grand Jury’s report regarding the state of animal welfare overseen by the County of Orange. The City of Villa Park provides the following responses:

*Finding F4: Based upon industry standards and best practices, Orange County Animal Care kennel attendants are understaffed to meet the needs of animals under care.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding based on the information provided by the Grand Jury Report. However, the City does not have the resources or staffing to independently verify the findings.

*Finding F6: The Orange County Animal Care Volunteer program was stopped during COVID-19 and restarting the program has been slow, resulting in decreased animal socialization and enrichment.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding based on the information provided by the Grand Jury Report. However, the City does not have the resources or staffing to independently verify the findings.

*Finding F7: Orange County Animal Care’s Behavior Evaluation Committee evaluates dogs for euthanasia without written guidelines, policies, or procedures, resulting in inconsistent outcomes over time. Behavior evaluated euthanasia outcomes are dependent on the experience and personal considerations of the individual committee members and management rather than written objective standards.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding based on the information provided by the Grand Jury Report. However, the City does not have the resources or staffing to independently verify the findings.

Finding F8: *The rate of behavioral euthanasia of dogs has increased significantly over the last 2 years.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding based on the information provided by the Grand Jury Report. However, the City does not have the resources or staffing to independently verify the findings.

Finding F9: *Orange County Animal Care does not employ a professional or trained and certified animal behaviorist to oversee the shelter's dog enrichment program, resulting in dogs with declining behavior being placed at greater risk of being euthanized.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding based on the information provided by the Grand Jury Report. However, the City does not have the resources or staffing to independently verify the findings.

Finding F10: *While many county and city animal shelters throughout the state have active Trap, Neuter, and Return programs, Orange County Animal Care stopped its Trap, Neuter, and Return program, reportedly on the basis of the County Counsel's legal opinion that the program violates a California statute related to willful animal abandonment.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding.

Finding F11: *The termination of the Trap, Neuter, and Return program is correlated with an increase in adult cat euthanasia rate at the shelter.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding based on the information provided by the Grand Jury Report. However, the City does not have the resources or staffing to independently verify the findings.

Finding F12: *There have been public concerns and requests expressed over the years for public programs to include a spay/neuter program by Orange County Animal Care.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding based on the information provided by the Grand Jury Report. However, the City does not have the resources or staffing to independently verify the findings.

Finding F13: *The current adoption appointment system restricts public access to the dog kennels, thereby limiting potential adopters' access to all available animals.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding based on the information provided by the Grand Jury Report. However, the City does not have the resources or staffing to independently verify the findings.

Finding F15: *Internal and community engagement does not adequately communicate the shelter's mission and operating strategy.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding based on the information provided by the Grand Jury Report. However, the City does not have the resources or staffing to independently verify the findings.

Finding F16: *The information currently on the Orange County Animal Care website for low-cost spay/neuter is not up to date with regard to referrals and prices for spay/neuter procedures.*

City Response: The City agrees with the finding based on the information provided by the Grand Jury Report. However, the City does not have the resources or staffing to independently verify the findings.

Recommendation R6: *By June 30, 2024, the Board of Supervisors should evaluate the strategic option of creating a Joint Powers Authority for the County and fourteen contract Cities to take ownership and shared responsibility for the financial and operating policies and practices of OCAC. (F1 thru F16)*

City Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented based on the time frame determined by the County Board of Supervisors. The City will support the recommendation at the extent requested by the Board by June 30, 2024.

Sincerely,

**THE CITY OF VILLA PARK**



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Robbie Pitts  
Mayor